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From the Editor's Desk

Welcome once again to another exciting issue of Circles. As always, we have the usual litany of excuses for issues coming out once a year, but those excuses definitely do not include your enthusiasm. Circles continues to gather a following all around the world. Part of the great charm of distributing our own title is the ability to see from where all you great folks are ordering. From Australia to Austria, from Japan to Mexico, and of course all the orders heading to APO/FPO addresses, thank you for enjoying the book and spreading the word!

A true story always begins with "No kidding, there I was." Thus, no kidding, there I was with my loving husband (yay Massachusetts) and my friend Tweekie. After a bit of carousing down in Fenway at Boston Beer Works, we sauntered to a club called Jillians, admiring all the nice white uniforms on the Navy sailors in town from the USS John F. Kennedy. We hopped into the club, flopped down with drinks, and schmoozed. A few minutes later, a very attractive pair of sailors come over to us and ask, " Do you know where any good clubs are around here?" Always willing to help a guest to the city, we started listing off Avalon, Manray, etc... "No, no, we were looking for something like a family club, if you know what I mean." Ah...

After some chatting and passing along names of "family friendly" clubs, we were told that there was a gaggle of gay folk from the ship all hanging out. We're talking a pile of at least 10-15 men and women, and we know that there is at least one more on that ship (who has ordered Circles none the less. You know who you are!) Retiring for the evening, we parted ways and wished them a good time in our city.

Now, all the rumors and stories of the Navy being a boat full of homos aside, and no matter what you think of our current political administration, would someone please explain the point of "Don't ask, don't tell" if obviously openly gay men and women are in the service, defending the country, and doing a pretty good job of it? To fill in our foreign readers, the United States Armed Forces has said as long as another member "don't ask" about sexual orientation, and the gay person in question "don't tell" about their sexual orientation, it's all good. Go ahead, serve with honor and pride, as long as you don't do something that makes Midwestern Fundamentalists feel all icky.

The US is, and has always been since its Puritan inception, obsessed with sex. Massachusetts has allowed same-sex marriage, but I'll go with John Stewart's theory that it was just a big "fuck you" to the Puritans who established the state in 1620. Go figure, "Banned in Boston," was the selling point for the famous porno "Deep Throat." Now, it's playing at the Coolidge Corner Theater.

And now my friends and I can enjoy a healthy marriage in the comfort of our own homes, assuming we don't go from a blue state to a red state. Give it a few more years.
-- Sean

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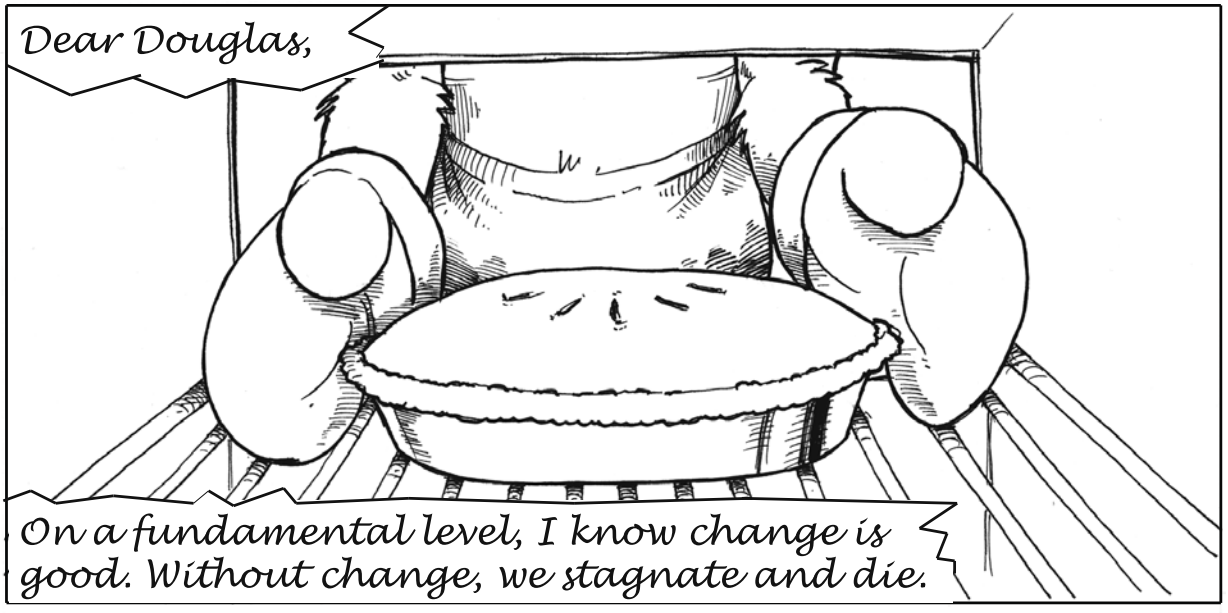
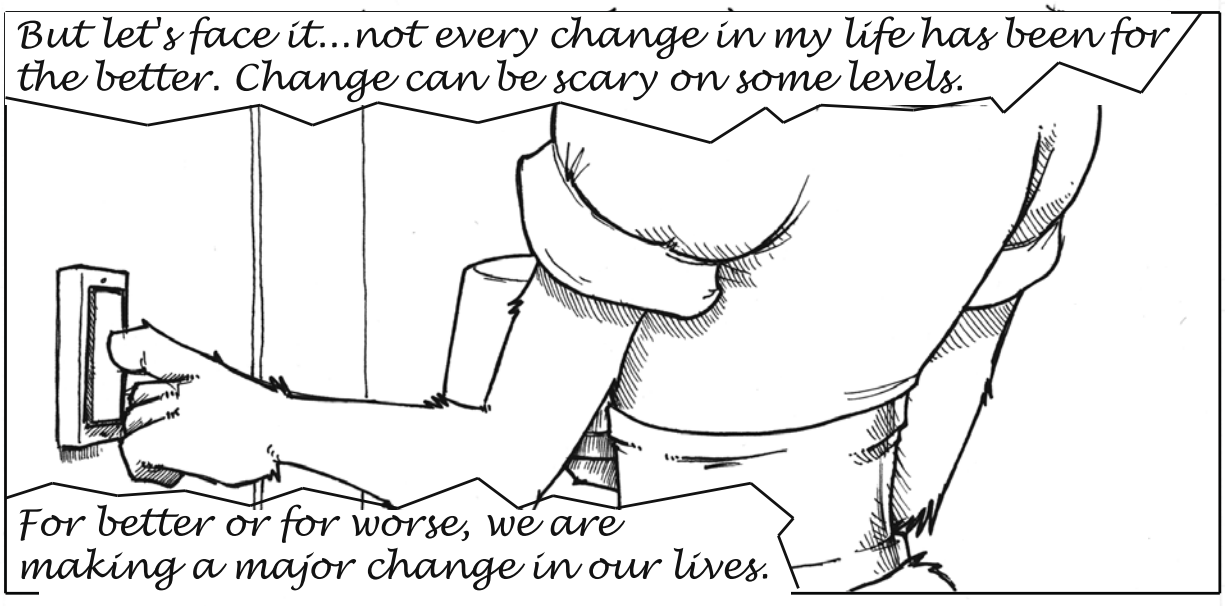
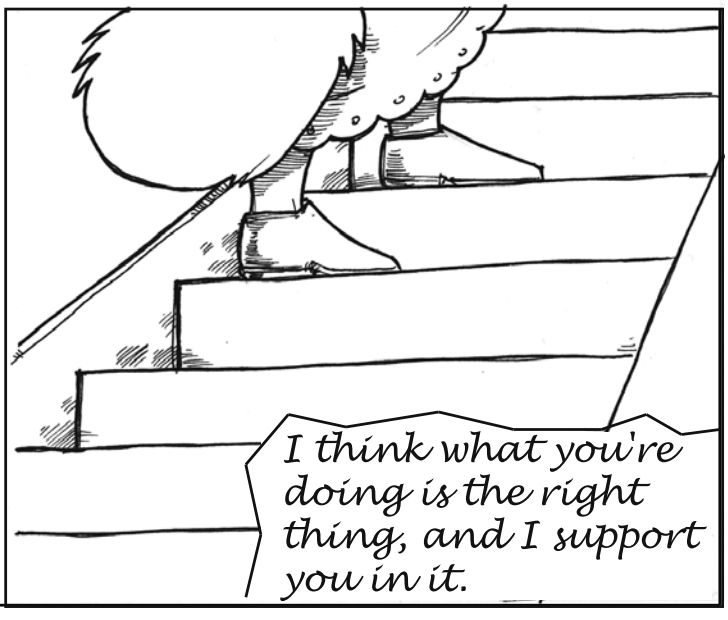

Dear Douglas,
On a fundamental level, I know change is good. Without change, we stagnate and die.


But let's face it...not every change in my life has been for the better. Change can be scary on some levels.
For better or for worse, we are making a major change in our lives.

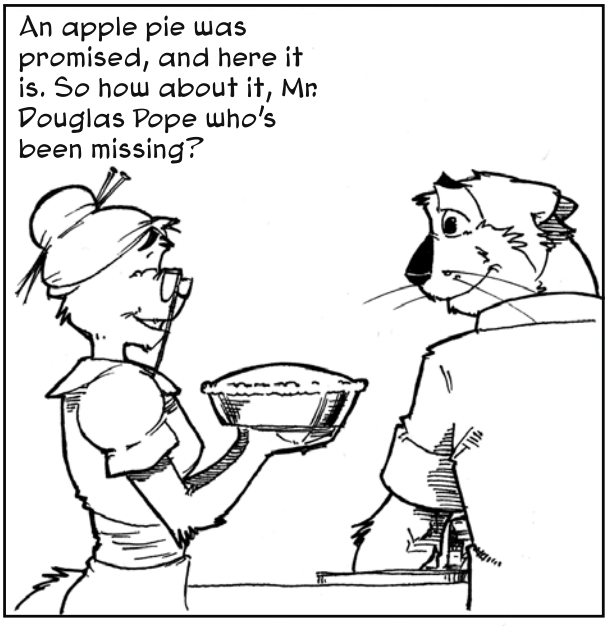
I'm with you 100%.


I think what you're doing is the right thing, and I support you in it.

I guess if I had to try and sum up how I'm feeling, though, I'd have to say that I'm frightened. What we're doing scares me.

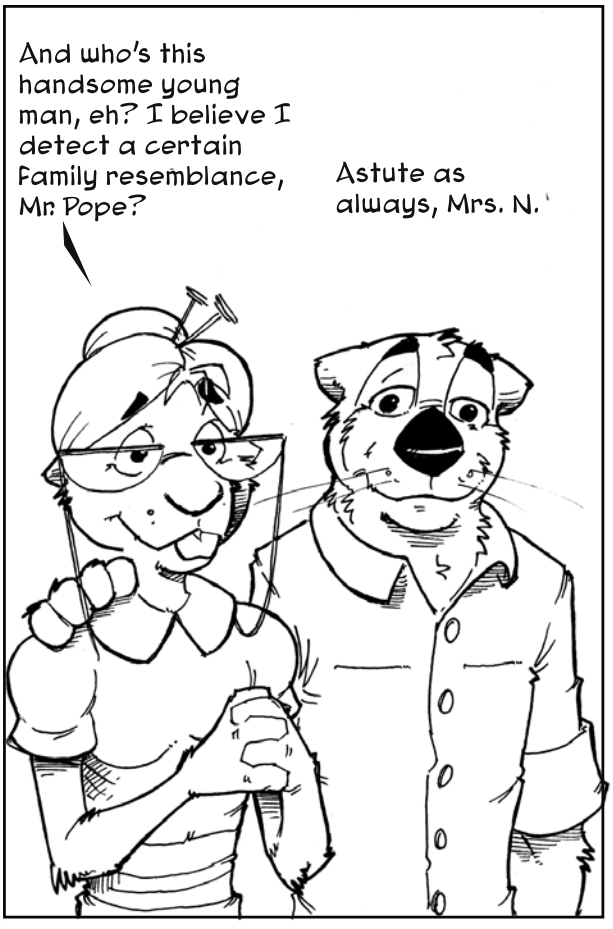
I'm frightened that I'm too old. That it will be too strange and new. That I will make another terrible mistake...

Well...


An apple pie was promised, and here it is. So how about it, Mr. Douglas Pope who's been missing?

Mmm...thanks, Mrs. N. Missed you.
Mm...I missed you, too. It's been too...

Eh?


And who's this handsome young man, eh? I believe I detect a certain family resemblance, Mr. Pope?
Astute as always, Mrs. N.

C'mere, Jason. I want you to meet Mrs. Nussbaum. She's our neighbor.
Oh?

S'nice t' meet you, Mrs. Nussbaum.
Always a pleasure, Jason. Are you Doug's cousin? A nephew,

Uh...not quite.

I'm frightened of being hated.

Circles

Issue Six: Life is What Happens to You While You're Busy Making Other Plans

Created by Steve Domanski, Scott Fabianek, and Andrew French
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Pencils & Inks: Scott
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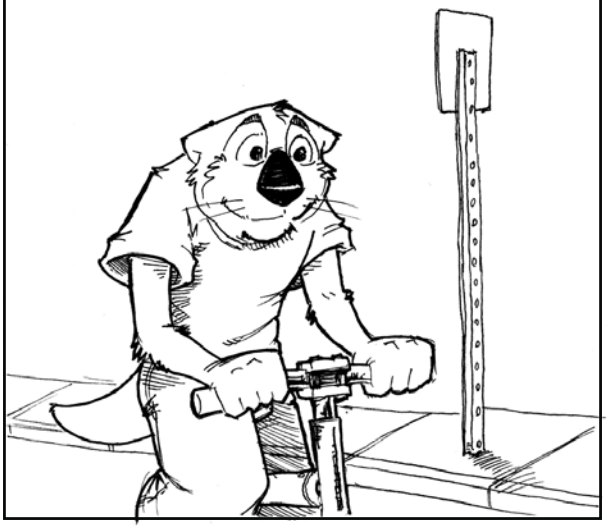
Jason is my son.

Love, Paulie

My story isn't nearly as interesting as Paulie's, for the most part.

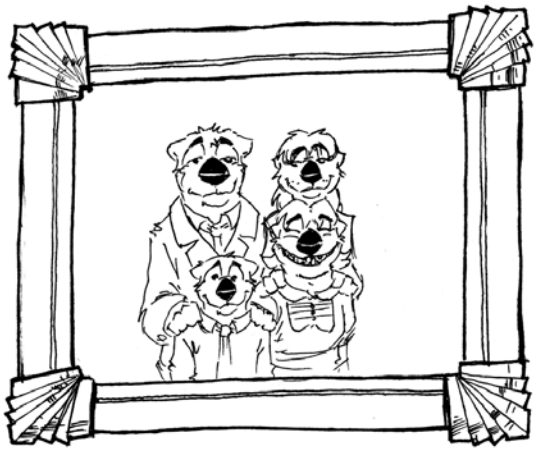
I grew up in the Cambridge, Mass. area...

And I had a pretty happy childhood.



We weren't rich, but we definitely weren't poor, either...I pretty much got what I wanted for Christmas, so to speak.

My folks got along fine...I had an older sister...pretty standard, upper middle-class, nuclear family stuff.



I knew that I had some feelings that I didn't understand about guys, but I didn't want to deal with it. So I learned to push them away and forget about them.

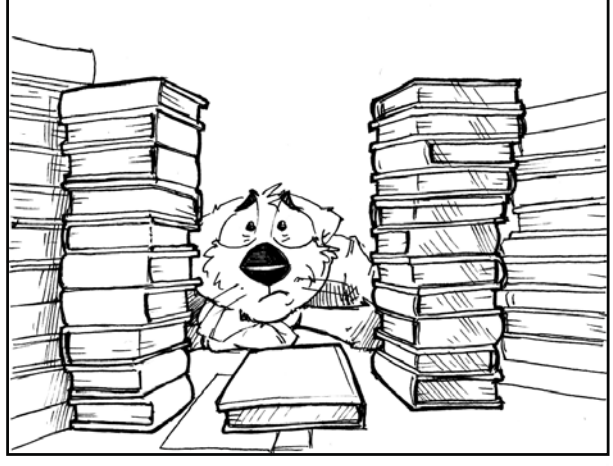
Well...mostly

I dated in High School, of course, and I had my share of fumbling encounters with the girls I dated. I never got into anything serious, though.

Not until Linda.

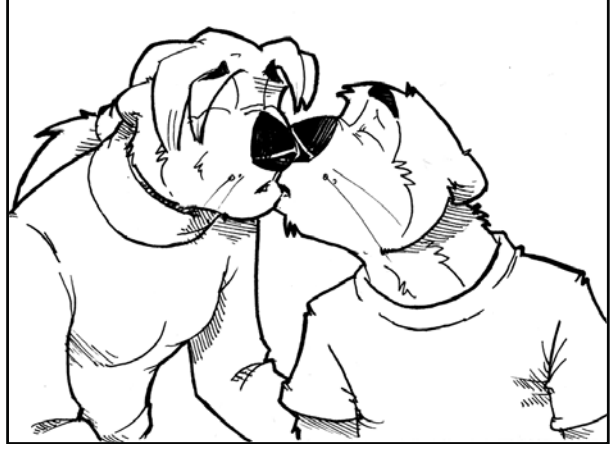
I knew I wanted to go to Harvard Business School when I was in High School. I had a head for numbers, and I figured I could find a field that appealed to me.

I got into Harvard, and I hit the books like crazy, trying to find exactly what appealed to me.

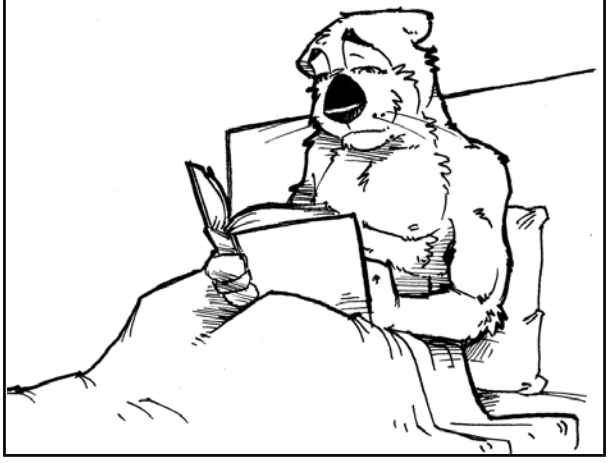


Linda was determined to be CEO of her own company, and she had a fire that I admired greatly. We just sort of ended up as natural study partners...

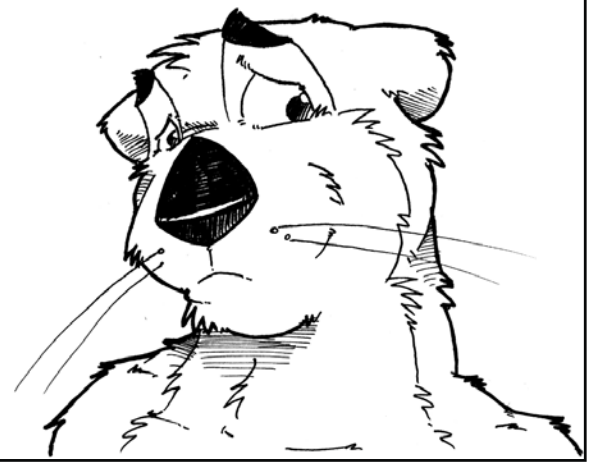
And...uh...more besides.



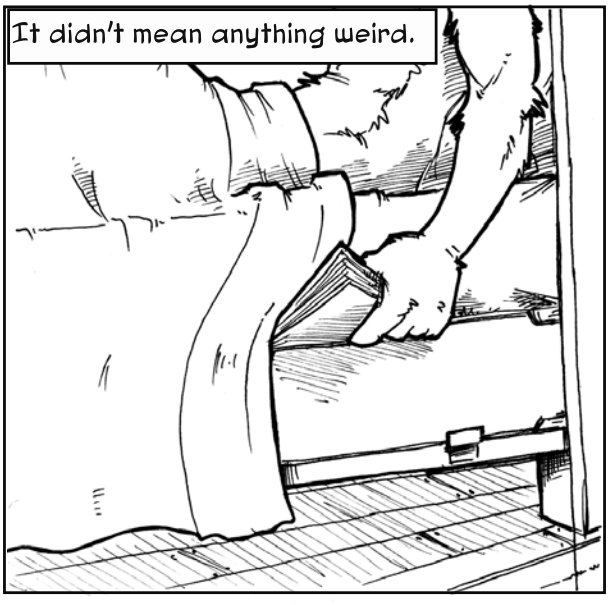
Linda was an extremely safe girlfriend. Her family was devoutly Catholic, as was she, and premarital sex was virtually out of the equation.



Which let me tell myself that it wasn't that I didn't want to have sex with her...



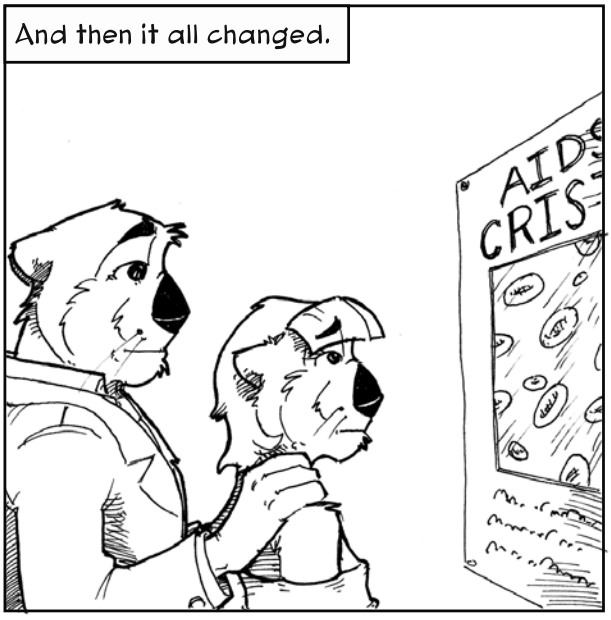
It didn't mean anything weird.



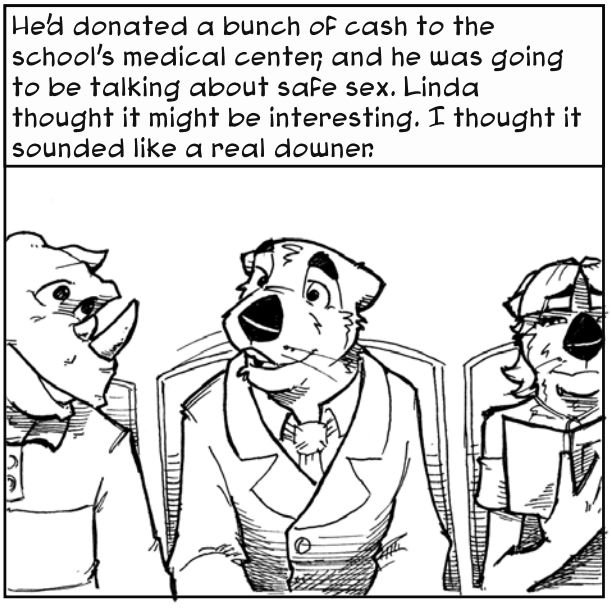
I was just saving myself.

Linda and I were a serious couple, though. We started to talk about partnerships, unions...marriage...

My grades were good, I had a part time job at a nearby bookstore, I had Linda. Yup...everything seemed safe and normal and predictable.


And then it all changed.
AID
CRIS

Ironically, the lecture was Linda's idea. This guy was coming to the school...


He'd donated a bunch of cash to the school's medical center; and he was going to be talking about safe sex. Linda thought it might be interesting. I thought it sounded like a real downer.

But then he came came out on stage...and what can I say?

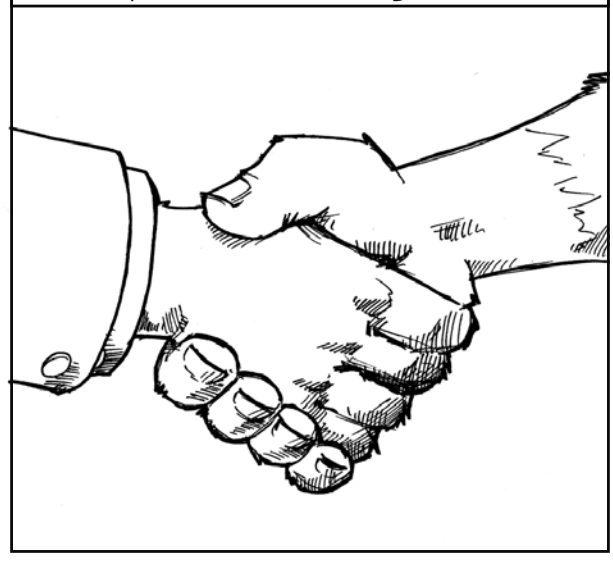
He was absolutely captivating.

The rest of the world went away, and I listened to him talk. He was funny, smart, interesting, and... well...y'know...sexy!

After the lecture, I was one of the students who paused to meet him.

He smiled at me and shook my hand as I introduced myself.

I didn't want to let go of his hand. It was so warm, and I liked the way it felt in mine.



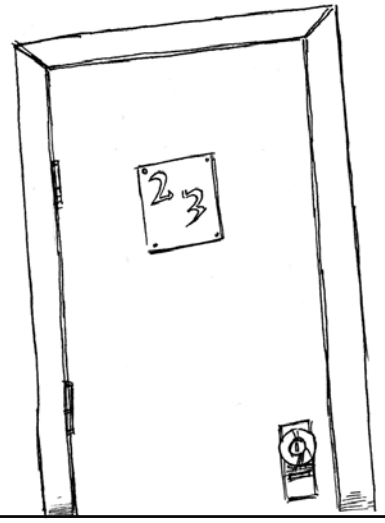
We talked for a while, and he ended up asking us out to dinner. I thought it was so sweet that a cultured guy would want to hang out with a couple of college kids.

After we said goodnight to Paulie, Linda asked me to come back to her dorm room that night.

Linda always was perceptive. I think she wanted to make sure she didn't have any competition.

Suddenly confronted with a situation I hadn't anticipated, I did my best to perform under pressure.

I guess I did okay...



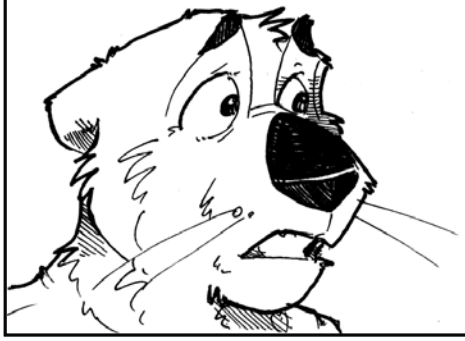
Plans proceeded as they had been, and the wedding talk was getting more serious now.

But my newfound friend, Mr. Mayhew, was also becoming a big part of my life, especially when I learned how close he lived to campus.

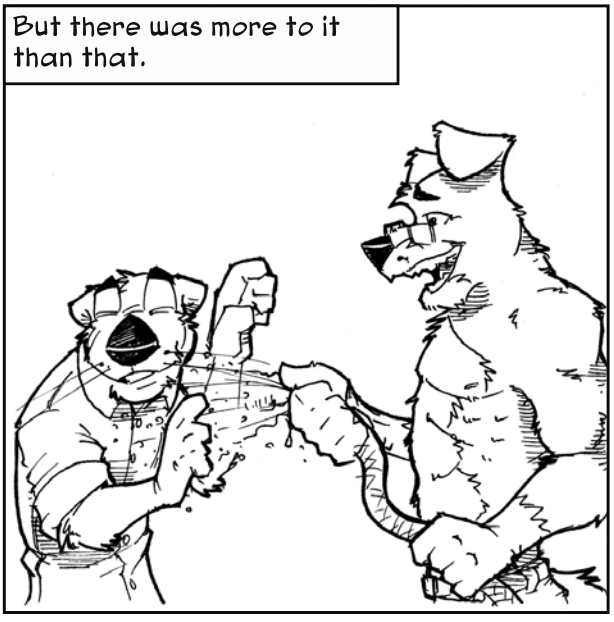
I'd go over, and we'd talk, about anything and everything. I told him all about Linda, and school, and my plans for the future. He told me all about his life, and how he was living with his illness.

I really thought he was a hot guy. Somehow the fact that I knew he was sick didn't change that or phase me.

Since I knew I'd never have sex with him, I could just enjoy the idea of it without worry.

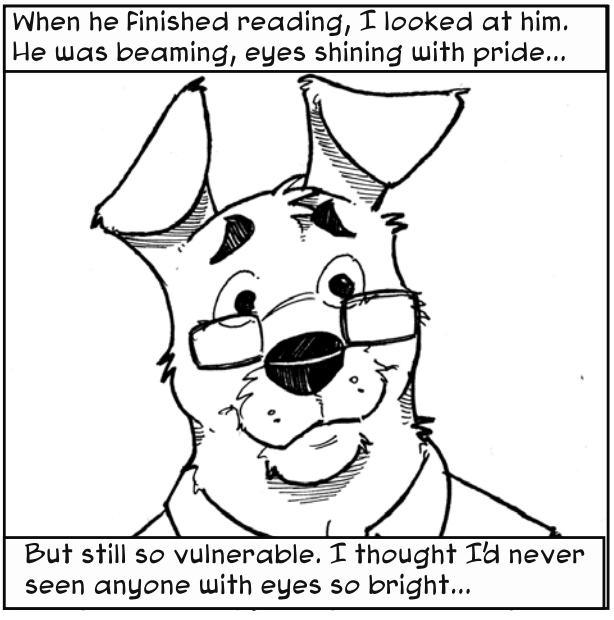


And believe me I *did* enjoy the idea of it.


But there was more to it than that.

The semester was chugging along, and, after a few months of hanging out and talking, I realized that I was starting to have some serious feelings for him, too.
One night, things came to a head. He had been working on his poems, and he wanted to read one to me.

I has been learning to cook, and I was trying out a new recipe on him.


When he finished reading, I looked at him. He was beaming, eyes shining with pride...
But still so vulnerable. I thought I'd never seen anyone with eyes so bright...

Paulie thought I was teasing him at first...

He hadn't been with anyone since Keith, and I think he'd forgotten that he can be so very attractive.

I had to convince him I was serious.

Then he was gentle, but dissuasive. He wasn't willing to get involved with me. Even if he weren't sick, he felt he was too old for me.

And besides, there was Linda.

He was right of course. But I was confused. I wasn't sure what to do. Where to go. Who I wanted to be with.

I know now that Paulie was confused, too.

I don't think he'd given any thought to being with someone after testing positive.

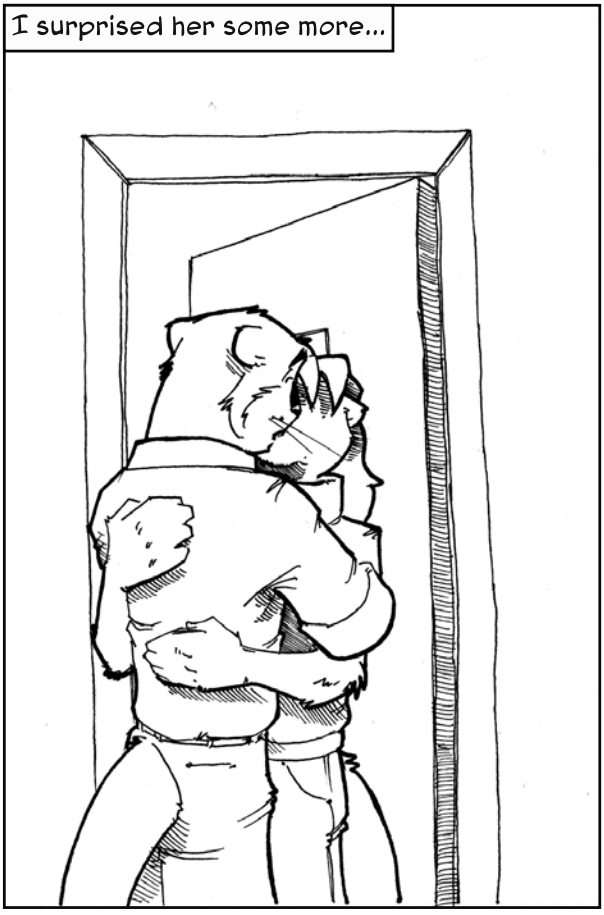
And I was probably one of the worst choices at that moment.

I don't have the best temper at times, and it makes me do some stupid things. Ask Arthur.

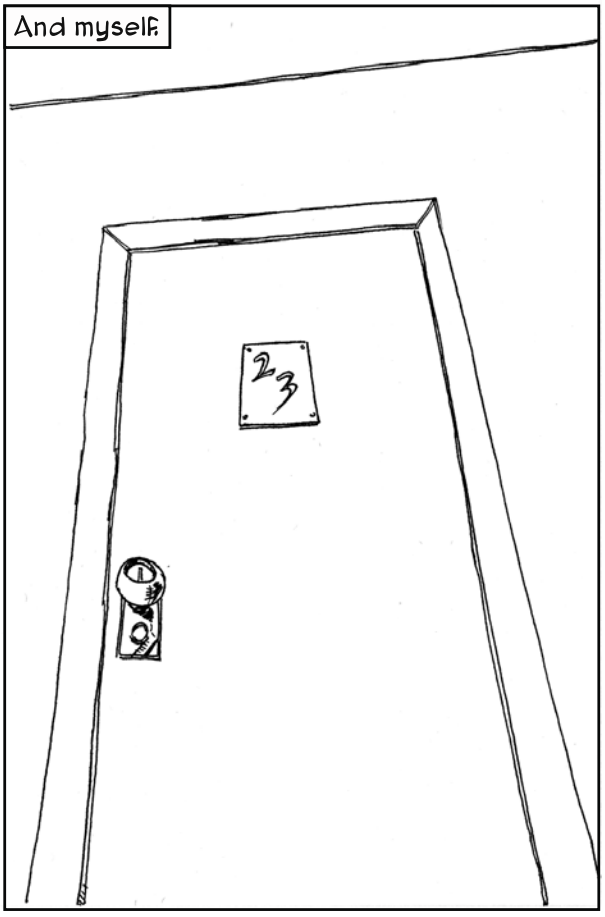
I walked back to school, fuming, but I didn't go to my dorm. I went to Linda's.

She was surprised to see me. I'd told her I was having dinner with my parents.

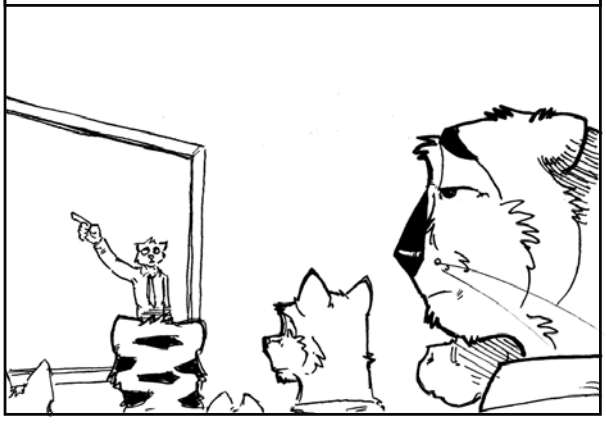
I surprised her some more...



And myself.



I walked around like a zombie the next day. I mean, how stupid do you get? I hadn't paused for a condom. I was so intent on proving to myself that I wasn't gay that I'd done the one thing I'd sworn up and down that I would never do.

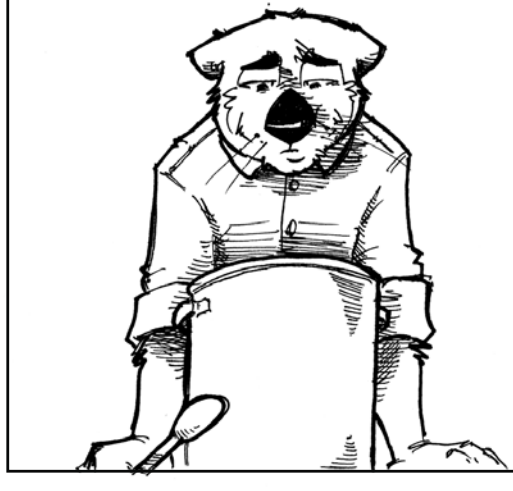


The next month is sort of a blur...

My grades went downhill, I stopped seeing Paulie, and Linda was starting to talk about setting a date for the wedding.

One weekend, I went to my parents' house. They had gone away for a couple of weeks, and I took the chance to do some serious thinking.

I wish I could tell you I had some kind of big spiritual epiphany while looking at a photo of my parents or something.

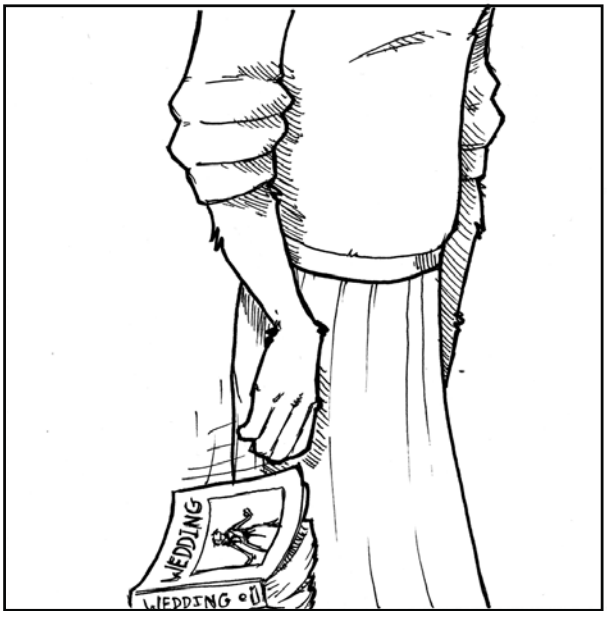


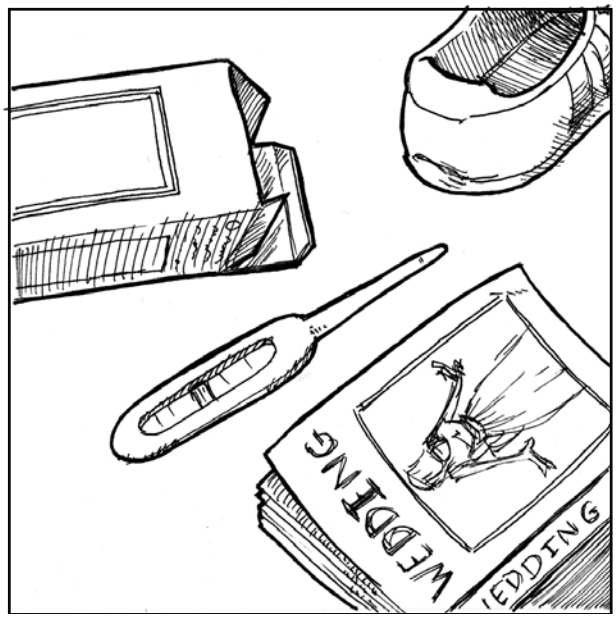
The truth is, in the middle of making some pasta, I just realized something.

I realized that I finally knew who I wanted to spend the rest of my life with.

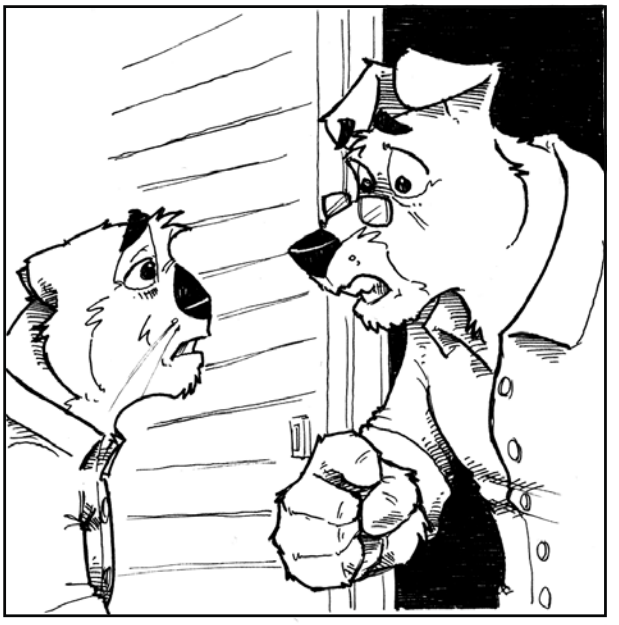
I also wish I could tell you that Linda took it well.

She didn't yell, which was worse than if she had. "I won't tell you to go to Hell," she said calmly, "Because you already are. Get out of my life before you ruin it even more."

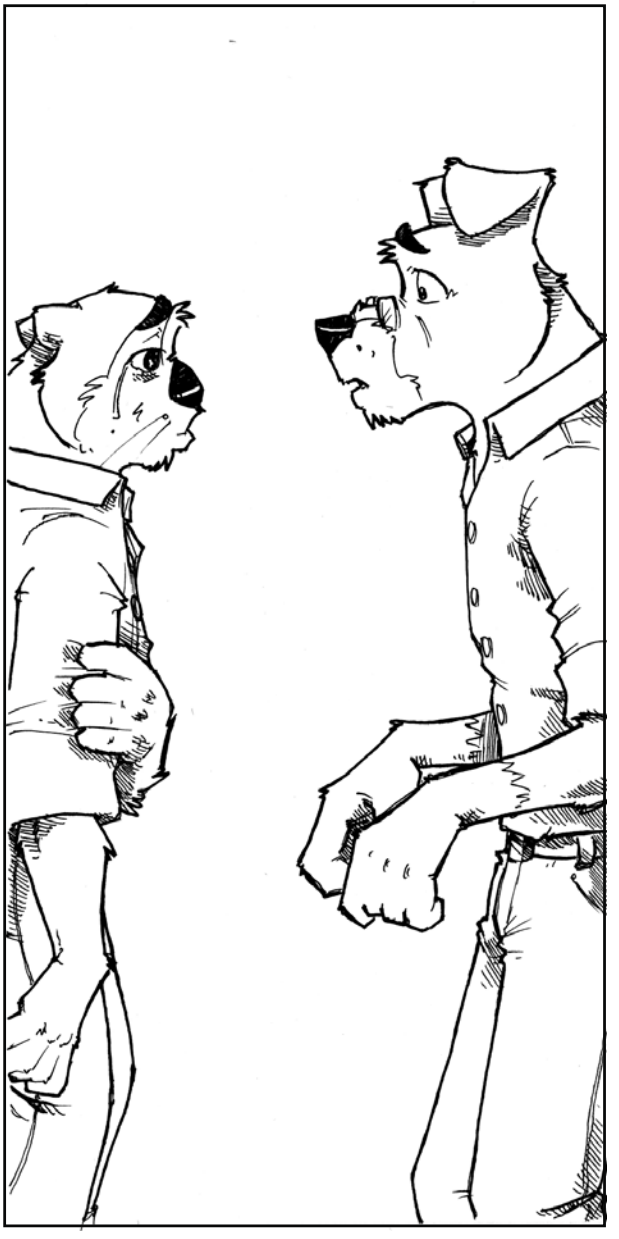




I pretty much ran to Kinsey Circle after that. I had to tell Paulie how I felt.



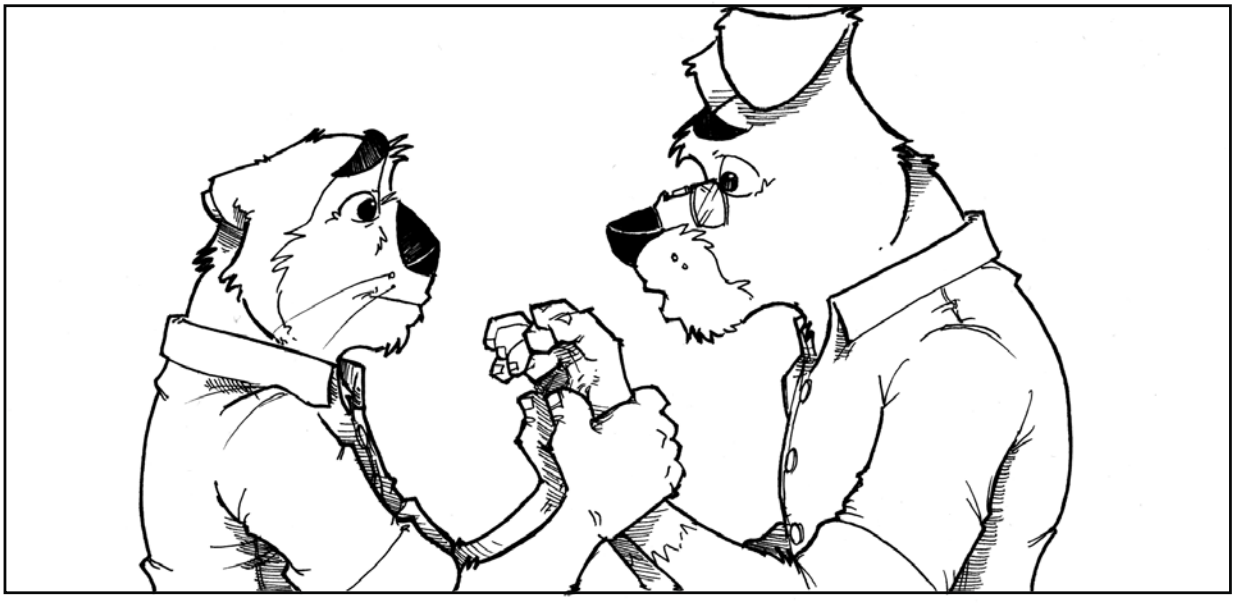
Look, I've made some pretty stupid mistakes in my life, so far, and I'm definitely not perfect.
Doug, I...

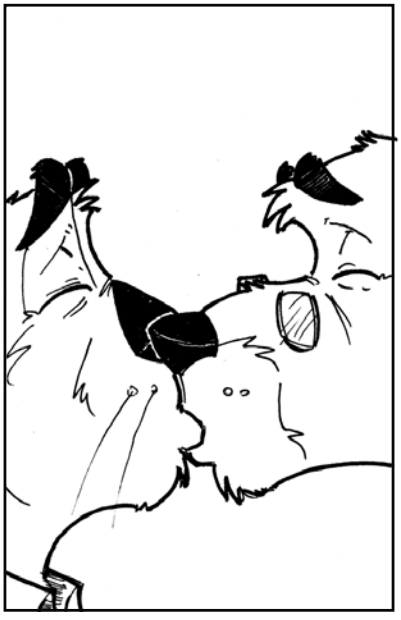


No...just...I have to get this out. Please. I've just ruined things with Linda. At least let me finish things with you right.

I love you. I don't know if I'm gay, or bi, or just confused, or what. But I love you. I don't care that you're sick. I don't care that you're probably old enough to be my Dad.

I don't care about anything, except that I love you, and I want to be with you for the rest of my life.





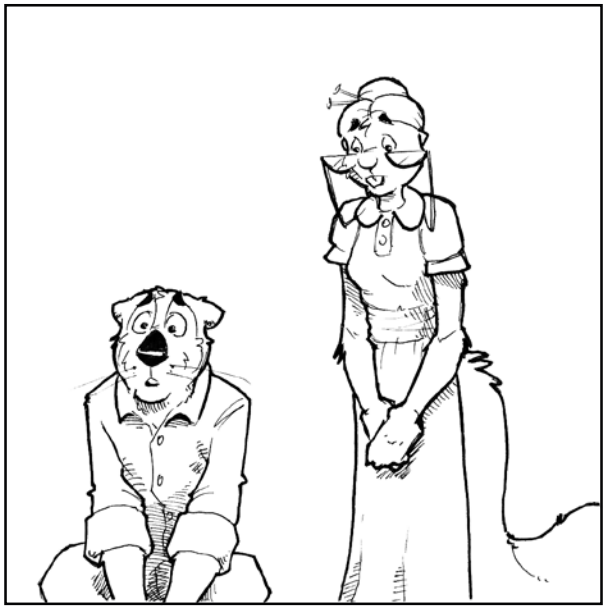
Doug...I...I don't know...
It's okay. I'll go now, if you want.

But, Doug...I...

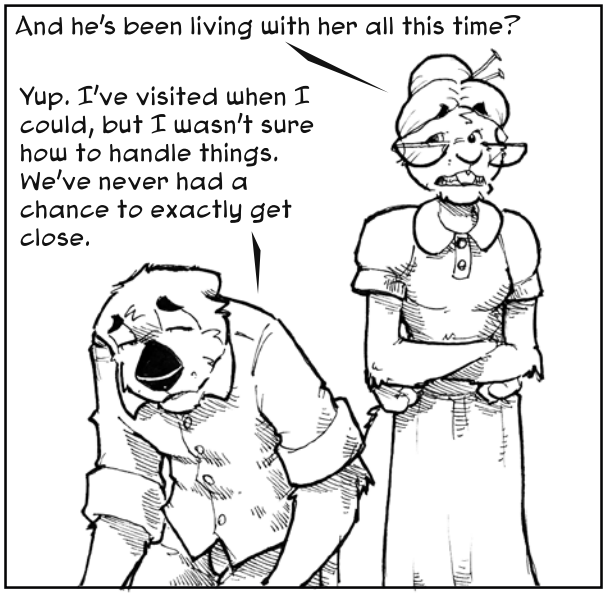
What?

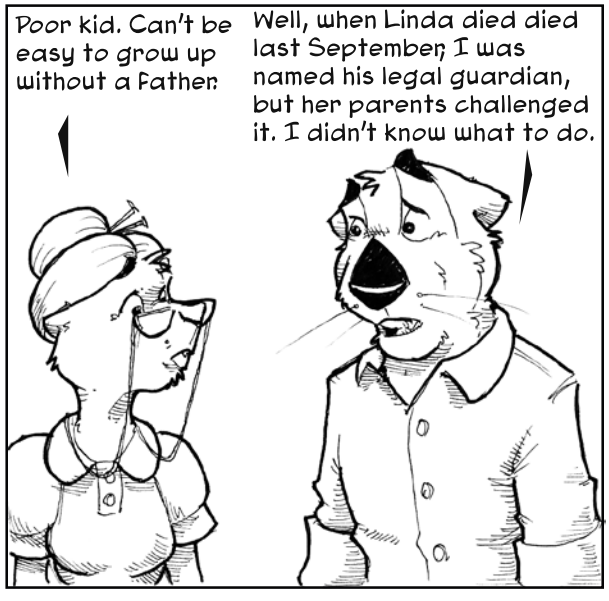
I didn't say...
that you had to go.

So I stayed.



So, you never knew that Jason was coming along?
I didn't even know he existed until he was five. It took Linda that long to forgive me, not that I blame her. I finally met him when he was eight.


And he's been living with her all this time?
Yup. I've visited when I could, but I wasn't sure how to handle things. We've never had a chance to exactly get close.


Poor kid. Can't be easy to grow up without a father.
Well, when Linda died died last September, I was named his legal guardian, but her parents challenged it. I didn't know what to do.

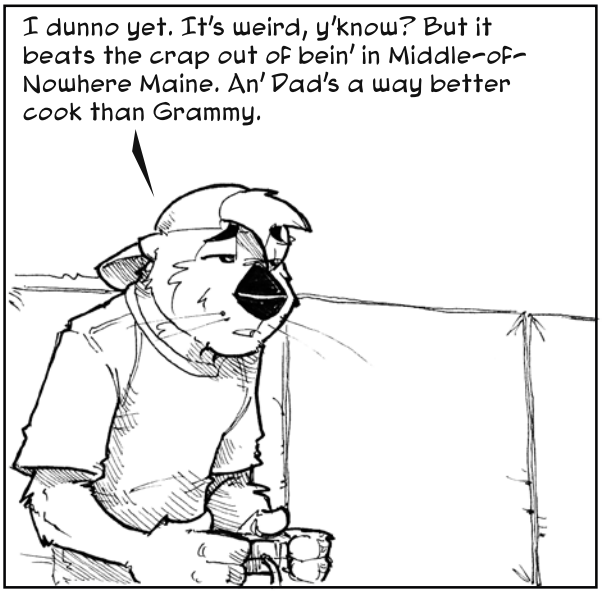
But this last Christmas, I had...I dunno... maybe the same kind of revelation that I had staring into that pot of pasta. I wanted Jason to know that I wanted him in my life.

So I talked to Paulie, and he agreed that Jason could come and live with us.
You talked also to Jason, I hope?
Of course! I wasn't going to drag him away against his will!

You can always ask me, y'know. I *am* sitting right here.

oy...
Heh.

Well...are you happy to be living with your father now?


I dunno yet. It's weird, y'know? But it beats the crap out of bein' in Middle-of-Nowhere Maine. An' Dad's a way better cook than Grammy.

So're you, Mrs. N. This is the best apple pie I ever had.
Is there any more?

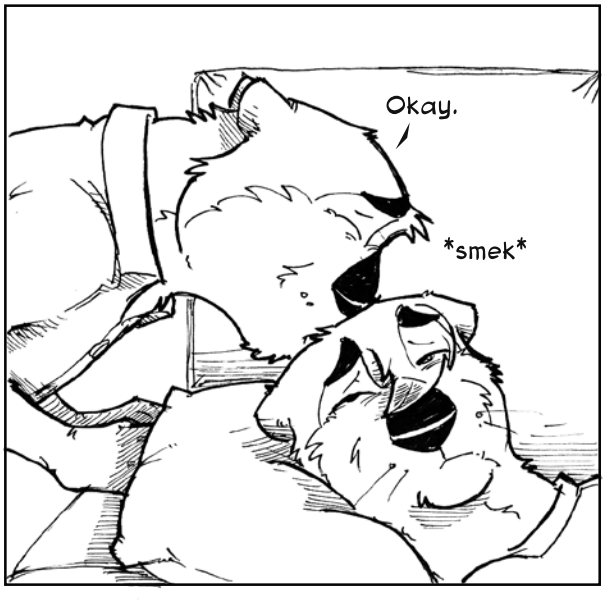
Nice boy.
At least he's honest.

I'm sorry we don't have a separate room for you, Jason. I thought the folding screens would give you some privacy, at least. We'll work out something more permanent once we get the spare room finished.
Sokay. Comfy couch.
Oh? Well...that's good.
I'll show you around the neighborhood this weekend. It works out that you're moving in during the summer, so you won't have to go right into school. It'll give you a chance to check the place out a bit.
Make sure I wanna stay?
What?!
Jus' jokin', Uncle Paul.
Oh...heh...of course.

And we're right upstairs if you need anything, okay?
'Kay.

Bathroom's right there.
Yup. You showed me.

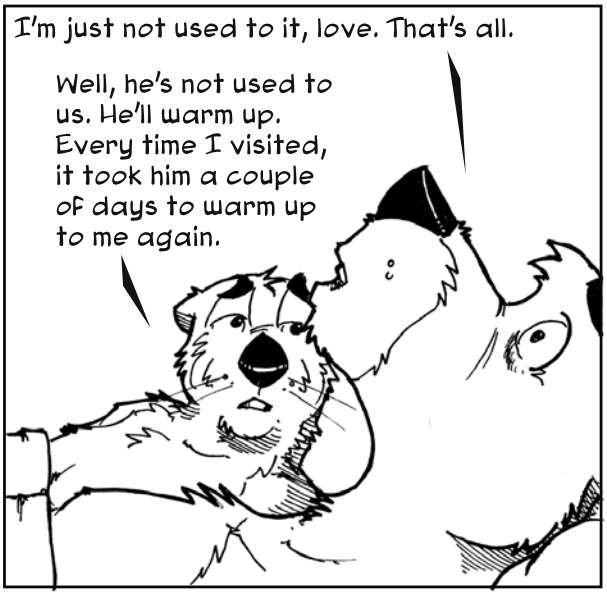
If you need any extra blankets or pillows, they're in the hall closet, okay?
Dad, really, I'm fine. Okay?


Okay.
smek

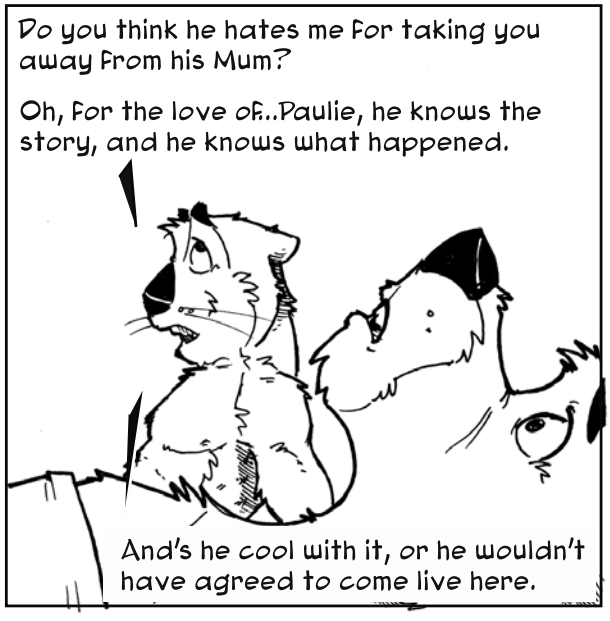
G'night, Jason.
Uhhhh...g'night, Dad.

Well...that was a little... awkward...

A little? "Uncle Paul"?
Well, it's yer name, isn't it?


I'm just not used to it, love. That's all.
Well, he's not used to us. He'll warm up. Every time I visited, it took him a couple of days to warm up to me again.

Yes, but that was in *his* home, and he knew you'd go away in a few days. And I wasn't there.
Paulie...


Do you think he hates me for taking you away from his Mum?
Oh, for the love of...Paulie, he knows the story, and he knows what happened.
And's he cool with it, or he wouldn't have agreed to come live here.

I just...I'm not used to children. I don't know how to relate.

Man, I've never seen you this freaked out! Are you gonna be okay with him tomorrow when I'm at work? I'd stay, but I've taken off so much time, lately...
Oh, I expect we'll muddle through.
Maybe that's what we need. Some time to get to know each other on our own.

Right! You are totally charming, after all. I'm sure you'll be best friends by tea-time.
Oh, stop that!

Paulie, you're worrying over nothing. Jason's a great kid! I'm honestly sure you guys will warm up to each other in no time.

I'm sure you're right. G'night, love.
G'night.

HARRY
OTTER

Okay, I've officially listened to every CD in my collection a million times. Any chance I could borrow sumpin' t' listen to?
Oh...of course, dea...uh...Jason. They're in that cabinet behind you.

Hunh.
Hmm?

Do you guys have, like, every Beatles album ever, or what?

What's wrong with that?
Nothin'. Th' Beatles are awesome. S'jus' a really big collection is all.

You...like the Beatles?
Sure. Why? Is that weird?

Well, no. I suppose not.
I mean...just because I'm 14, it doesn't mean that I don't know about stuff that happened before I was born.
Oh, no, no, dear. I didn't mean that.

Well...hmmm...if you like the Beatles...

Hey, nice. Got some ol' vinyl, huh?
Mmm-hmm.

Whoa. Is that...?
Mmm-hmm.

Wait...copyright 1968? So it's not a reprint? This is an original?
Mmm-hmm.

Waitasec...

Are these signatures real?!
Indeed they are.
Whoa...

Remember, my boy, I lived in England in the 60s. The Beatles were *my* band.
My friend Colin and I bought every album as they came out.

That's really cool, Uncle Paul.
Please, Jason...call me Paulie?
Well...yeah, okay, Uncle Paulie.

I really do want to be friends, Jason. I can't imagine your mother had much good to say of me. We only met a couple of times before...well...before...
I think she kinda liked you.

She did?!
Yeah. She didn't like to admit it, but I once overheard her tell Grammy that you were probably the best thing for her and Dad. She said that she was glad he'd found you, because, otherwise, they would've gotten married...
And it woulda been a disaster.

I...I never thought of it that way.
So don't sweat it. It's not like I grew up hatin' ya or somethin'. I just didn't understand. I mean...I still don't, really...
But it's obvious you an' Dad make each other happy. So I'm cool, okay?

Well, it sounds like a good place to start.
Awesome!

COME TO TAYE & MARTY'S APARTMENT
♡P

llo?
In the living room, love!
You gotta be cheating! No one can do that combo!
Pft...owned.
Aww,

What's all this?
DDR Tournament. Your son is taking no prisoners.

Awww, yeah!
And the victory goes to the Ace!
Dude, I'm wiped.

You ready for another round, Uncle Paulie?
Oh, no. You win as far as I'm concerned, dear.

How 'bout you, Dad? Ready for a beatin'?
Hmmm...

You're goin' down, boy.
In yer dreams, Ol' Man.

Dear Douglas,

Just when I thought I had nothing more to learn about people, someone new comes along and reminds me that everyone you meet is totally unique.

And, yet, are we really so very different?

Sometimes, something as simple as a shared song, or dance, or favorite food, or book...or even video game... is enough common ground to start building a friendship on.

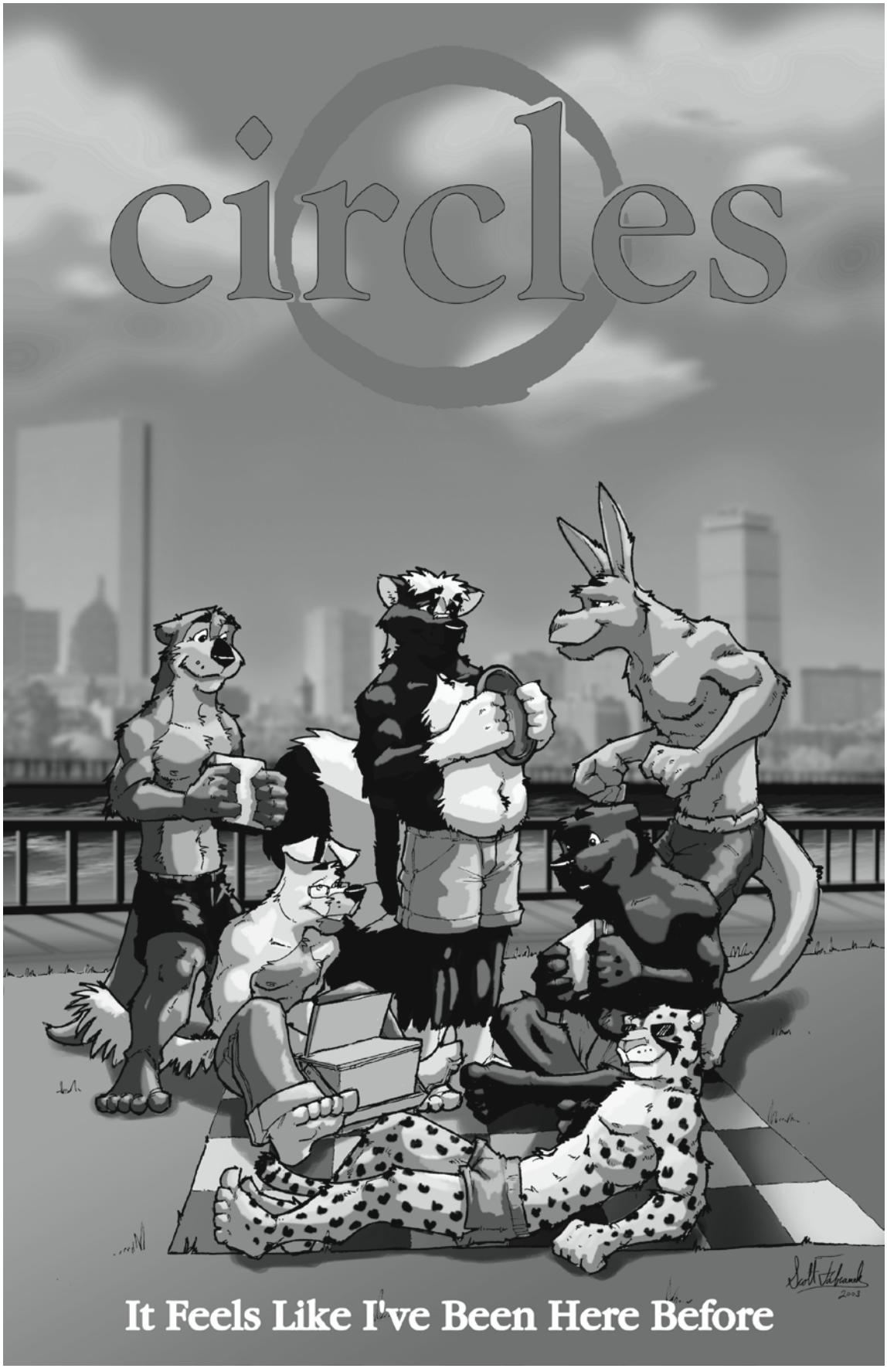
Sometimes, no matter how different someone seems, all it takes is a little bit of nonsense to remind us that we're also very much alike.

We all laugh alike, and play alike, even if the games we know are different.

And from new people, we can also learn a lot of new things about ourselves. And that may be the best reason to share ourselves with others.

He's a good boy, and I like him.

Love, Paulie



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Issues 0 to 4, never before seen sketches, 6 Kinsey Circle house layouts, and more! Makes a great gift.
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6 kinsey circle

letters to the boys

For once Im going to slip down into the Realm of Fanboiness and tell you guys just how much I loved my copy of Issue 5. After watching Rabbit Valley for weeks waiting for the pre-order to be available, I dashed over to it as soon as I got the email notice, whisking away without caring how much it cost me as long as I had THIS COMIC in my possession ASAP.

Ive spent the last half-hour or so here at my job reading through this and needless to say I am impressed. Unlike most other comics I've read, I feel like I can relate to the characters of Circles in some way. I love it, my other four issues, and my KICK ASS shirt (which by chance I happen to be wearing this morning...go figure? Heehee).

I've recommened y'alls comics to many of my friends, even some of the straight ones. (Though I'm still working on getting my brother to see it as more than gay porn). And I do plan to rant and rave in my LiveJournal as well...oh, and of course my mate says, "Hi," and that he too loves his issue if Circles 5. =^^=

Ok, enough swooning fanboiness. I leave you to go back to your life and to not have to listen to my ramblings a second longer. Here's sending many words of praise and hopes that whatever muse you've found, you keep at it.

Just another fanboi in the mix of Gay America,
Sebby a.k.a. Geoff H.

Sebby/Geoff, so happy to hear you're reveling in your fanboiness. ;)
Honestly, we're very pleased you liked Issue #5 so much. And, yes, the shirt kicks ass. :)

Hi, I'm a huge fan of Circles, a recent fan too. A friend of mine lent me issue 1, and after that I quickly bought the other 4. Well, I was just wondering if there was going to be an issue 6. Don't get me wrong, I understand that you guys get the issues out when they're done in however long it takes. It's just that me being a recent fan and all, I'm not sure if maybe it's old news that Circles won't be updated anymore and I just wasn't around to notice. But my appreciation would be boundless if you could return my e-mail and answer my question.

Sincerely,
Anonymous Fan

P. S. If Circles really is dead, please break the news to me easy. I'm an emotional guy.

AF...I know I responded to you online, but I got such a chuckle out of your P.S. that I had to share it with the folks. As you can see, Circles is not dead. We have no intention of stopping until the story gets to the closing point. And, yes, there is a stopping point. How close are we? Not quite halfway.

Dear Paulie (Andy) and all,

I have only discdovered you recently, just as I moved states from my home of 35 years, and left my alpha lover. The character developement and emotional content has stirred my soul, and given me hope that such a wonderful anthro family exists for me. I love you all.

howlerboi
LA, CA

We love you, too, Howler. Seriously, one of the big themes in Circles is that, while you

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have family that's related to you by blood, your family can also be what you make of it. Certainly, I consider my friends in the Boston area, as well as many folks all over the place to be part of our extended family. I started to try to do individual shout-outs to them, but I'm afraid I'll miss folks. Let's put it this way. I love my big extended family!

FROM OUR YAHOO GROUP

Re: I got my #5.
Let me be the first to say: Woah. <o,o>

Anyone who likes Paulie will love this one. Wonderful storyline. Many questions answered and several new ones raised to ponder. Memories of the past both sweet and sour, and hints of things to come. And some very, *very* nice eye candy from Mr. Fabianek. A must-have for the Circles fan. Great work, gentlemen, once again. I still want to see wedding pictures, Andy. :D

- Wolf Starchaser

Thanks, Wolf. Wedding pics, sadly, will be difficult. I think we only took one or two. But we're having a BBQ in June (I'm writing this at the end of May) with both families there. I'll try to grab some pics. :) Oh, and for those who don't know, Steve and I got hitched in December 2004. :)

Re: A question of dates

Wasn't Paulie born in 1948, not 1958? Stonewall was in 1969, and if he was 21 that year, then (unless they're using some strange math in the Circles universe!) he had to have been born in 1948. But it says quite clearly he was born on March 10th, 1958.

I lose my keys, or loose change sometimes, but I've never misplaced a decade! ;-)

- Dave

Ahem. Yes, well. Okay, you caught me being imperfect. Issue 5 suggests Paulie was born in the wrong year. Paulie was in fact born in 1948. Sorry, everyone!

Re: Spoilers for #5? You bet!

I just got Circles # 5 in the mail today. I am glad I got 3 of them. I am going to give the paper back (when it comes out) and #5 to a friend who will appreciate it. [FYI: It's out now. - Ed.]

Although I wish there as a lot more comic art to the story of #5, where as I am K-9 incarnate, it was a very good issue. I was extremely pleased with the description of the gay scene. I almost think no one ever addresses that aspect of what goes on. Often times I think that the gay scene is painted to be love at 1st sight or some slutty orgy. From my perspective, a lot of the gay scene I am exposed to is hubbed at an adult book store, gay dance nights, and established gay bars. The degrees of separation among gay people in the city you live in are very few.

From my opinion, younger gay relationships aren't static, and flexibility among partners is healthier and longer lasting then monogamy.

The comic touched a portrayal of modern gay life, as well it depicted Paulie's gay life through the 70's-80's. Very little seems to have changed.

Some things that I found interesting and cute:
-- the idea that Ken (a cat) and Michael (a mouse of sorts) together

6 kinsey circle

letters to the boys

-- Keith (a cat) giving Paulie (a dog) HIV

Is there any symbolism for the stereotype of how a mouse, a cat, and a dog can be viewed? In the universe of Circles, is there any racism as we have here in our universe? What's considered to be taboo?

-Calib

And before I could respond, a friend did it for me.

Putting my two cents in, it seems to me that the characters themselves make no distinction in species consciously. The one line in Paulie's story where he says he "rejoins the human race" seems to indicate this. In Circles, the focus is less on the "animal" aspect of the characters, as if the whole story is a play or being put on by anthropomorphic characters. Just as the all male cast of original, ancient productions of "Romeo and Juliet" did not acknowledge their genders when playing their roles, neither are these characters aware of their species, regarding themselves as simply, "people." The issue of race, unless I missed it somewhere, has yet to be explored here, and time will tell whether species plays into what "race" the characters are meant to have.

Although, on the other hand, the artist and writers themselves (who can stop me at any time if I'm wrong) intentionally put the characters at least in context of what animals exist in their places of bitrh, with a few rare exceptions (unless a zoo in Georgia happens to carry a famous cheetah, like Ken). Taye, an Australian-born kangaroo, Arthur, a bear form Connecticut, and so on.

On a funnier note, I LOVE how the look on Paulie's father's face on his coming out looked almost exactly like Paulie when he aped it for Marty in issue 2 (I've been oot on the boats before, and I know how you feel, but it isn't love, son!) From that scene, I had guessed long ago, that Paulie's father was from Edinburgh long ago... cause Paulie does such a wonderful job of acting it out.

Hate to point out any flaws in our wonderful mag,(though we all know it's not perfect... where do Taye and Marty go to school again? :D), and this is addressed directly towards Andy, so Andy-hon, I hope you're reading this. Here goes: When talking about Gingersnap, his name is given as "Greg", but when Paulie recalls his fears in the fifth or so paragraph, his inner monologue has him saying" I've slept with Graham." Who is Graham? Is his full name Greg Graham? Was Graham a mutual friend/lover of the four of them? Was Graham a concept-level name for Greg? I'm sure that's what it was -- a hiccup in the editing process.

One more thing: can we assume, since it's never directly said, even in Pauile's diary entry, that Doug's departure has been a personal road trip back to his family, where ever they live, to set some things right, as he hinted back at Christmastime? The teaser for the next issue seems to indicate this. I'm just going through the motions of asking, really; I'm quite certain that's the thing.

But listen to me here. I've gone and written a novel in response to this. I know I'm just a lurker here, so when I say something here, I try to make it worth your time, friends. Anyway, in closing, love the book, love the issue, love you all, and hope to run into you at the con!

~Chris "Iffy" McMahon
Razzafrackin'…*sigh* Okay. His name was Greg. Graham was a name I picked in the original, and then I dismissed it as being too British. ;)

Iffy, you nailed it on the head. We've often been quoted as saying that Circles is a story about people, seen through a "furry lens". But the analogy of furry actors playingi n a

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human drama works equally well.

Re: Question on Issue 5

In Issue 5, it begins with Paulie writing a letter to Douglas, who, it seems is on a trip of some sort. But after combing through the earlier issues, I have seen no indication of Doug going anywhere. He is shown in Issue 5 behind the wheel of his car, looking for all the world like his brother died, or some other horrible tragedy. Did I somehow miss something, or is this mystery trip something to be explained later on?

-Krahnos

Now you know. Oh...and on the same subject...

I think it will be explained explicitly later on. For now, I see it as the result of a decision made by Douglas to "fix things" in his family.

I know that he lost someone formerly close to him, (the female seen scowling at Pauline in #5, perhaps? Ex-wife? Former girlfriend/fiancee?) and this may well be his way of dealing with it. The trailer did say #6 will change his relationship with Paulie...

- Wolf Starchaser

You got about halfway, Wolf, but someone got it bang on the button...

My bet is that there is a kid coming into the picture with Paulie and Douglas and that a decision of what to do about it has been brewing for a while.

- Flint

Hey, Flinters. Hope you made some money on your bet. :)

OK. First off, I have to say that this issue struck home with me. Paulie's relationship with Colin almost mirrored my first friend. Although, Paulie and Colin were MUCH older than Mark and I. Mark was a couple of years older than me, as Colin was to Paulie.

Mark was considered a trouble maker, a goof off, a wiley upstart. But, he was never mean-spirited. Just mischievious. He was my best friend for the 2 years we knew each other. He was also my FIRST, and only, sexual partner until I was 33! He made the first move, too, as I recall! >"^_^"<

Reading about Paulie and Colin brought Mark back to me for a moment. I think, if Mark hadn't moved away, with his family, he and I would be lovers and maybe I would have had the courage to come out to my mother earlier in life. But things didn't work out that way.

Now, as I'm reading Circles, my mate pointed out something that I was thinking about, too. Every issue, Paulie writes in his journal, to Douglas. Now, the purpose of this is clear in issue one. It's for Doug to read when Paulie eventually dies. But, seeing Douglas's face as he was driving, something struck me. Now, I could be WAY OFF on this, so bear with me. Could Paulie already be gone and the whole series is being read by Douglas from Paulie's journal?

- Runtt

I'm going to do something I never do. I'm going to give…*gasp*…a straight answer. While I agree that Paulie's motive for writing his journal is to keep a record

for Douglas, the series is not written from the perspective of Douglas reading it after Paulie passed away. You'll notice that events occur that Paulie is not 100% privy to, for one thing (such as the aside comments of Mac and his cronies in the gym during Issue 4, or the fact that Ken seems to have instigated Roger in Issue 3). For that matter, a big chunk of this issue is Douglas talking to Mrs. Nussbaum about his youth. This is definitely not something Paulie is writing down in his journal.

A lot of folks are probably breathing a collective sigh. All I'm saying, however, is that the comic is meant to be a reenactment of what's happening during the dates we're depicting. So for this Issue, #6, it's summer 2002, and we're seeing the events of Jason's arrival at 6 Kinsey Circle.

And now, I'm gonna do something else I don't usually do. I'm gonna sneak peak you all a bit as to where we're going.

Just as Issues 1 through 4 (which along with Issue 0, can be found in our first collection, It Seems Like I've Been Here Before, which should now be available from Rabbit Valley) deals with the first year of Marty's life at 6 Kinsey Circle and his relationship with Taye coming to what they used to call its consummation, Issues 5 through 9 (which will eventually be collected in a book that I'm tentatively thinking of as There's No Clear-Cut Beginnings) will continue to tell the back stories of our characters, while continuing to propel their lives forward. After that, well…we'll see.

Issue 7 will answer some questions about the backgrounds of Arthur and John. It will also answer the questions, "Is Arthur ever gonna get a boyfriend?" and, "Does Ken think that Michael is The One?"

Issue 8 delves a bit into the past of Mr. Taylor Dooley, from his youth in Australia to his dreams of being a star on Broadway. It also continues the story of Ken's relationship, propelling us towards Issue 9. In the last issue of the arc, Ken and Paulie have the place to themselves, and Ken finally tells his tale, as well as giving us a glimpse of where he's ultimately headed.

And that's all for now. :)

- Andy

In Our Next Issue:

"Ken has a a reputation as the Kinsey's house's playboy, but has his latest beau turned out to be The One? And when Arthur and John discuss their past, what will it mean for their future? Find out in Issue Seven: Isn't Anyone Trying to Find Me?"

The Last Word:

A special thanks to Michael Eichner. His suggestion that one of the characters might have had a child suddenly gave us a big plot thread and a subject we wanted to explore. Thanks Mike!

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WHOA, HOLD ON, HOLD ON.
YOU CAN DISPENSE WITH THE SCHTICK, ALL RIGHT? YOU SOUND LIKE A BROCHURE.
YEAH, YA THINK? SORRY 'BOUT THAT... IT'S ALL PART OF THE ATMOSPHERE, Y'KNOW?
TRUST ME - ATMOSPHERE IS THE LAST THING I'M AFTER.
WELL, I CAN AT LEAST SHOW YOU TO YOUR CABIN, AND GIVE YOU THE LAY OF THE LAND.
UM... IT'S JUST YOU, THEN? NO FAMILY, NO YOUNG'UNS?
JUST ME. BLAME MY BOSS. I THINK HE'S SEEN "CITY SLICKERS" ONE TOO MANY TIMES.
HEH... YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW OFTEN WE GET THAT.
HELL-OOO-OO!
YIPPEE-KI-YAY.
WEST STABLE. MAIN LODGE, WHERE WE ALL EAT.
NORTH STABLE - THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL MEET FOR TRAIL RIDES.
LAKE OF FIRE BURNING WITH SULFUR... PIT OF LOST SOULS... PITCHFORK STORAGE...
...AND THE CABINS.
WOW. WITH INDOOR PLUMBING AND EVERYTHING.
HEY, C'MON. GIVE IT A CHANCE. YOU MIGHT ENJOY YOURSELF.
7
THERE'S SNACKS AND COFFEE IN THE LODGE FOR ALL NEW ARRIVALS IF YOU WANT IT.
YEAH... MAYBE I'LL GO MEET THE REST OF THE INMATES.

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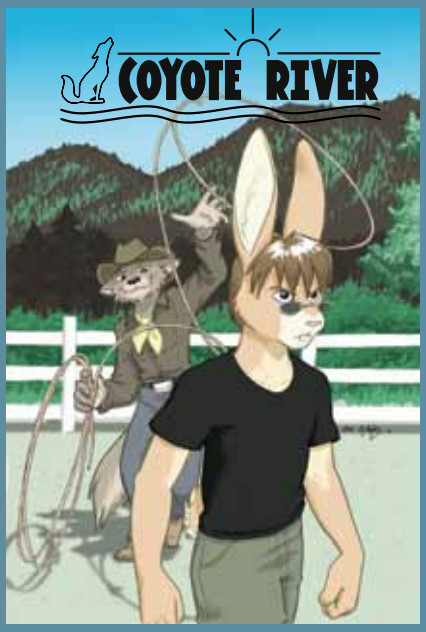

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